



Ministry
of Defence

Healthy living

Things to think about



Adapting to the challenge



As a result of COVID-19 everyone in Defence will be trying to adapt to new ways of working. Some of us are now newly working from home while others are based away from home perhaps for the first time, and each situation poses a unique set of challenges. Additionally, for any key workers still attending work locations in person, this is an unusually complicated time.



So it's worth being aware that there are some warning signs such as drinking more alcohol or smoking more than is usual, or having difficulty sleeping. These may suggest that you are beginning to find it harder to cope mentally, so make sure you seek support.

Diet and Exercise

What you eat

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, (the [BBC Good Food website](#) has some good ideas) drink enough water, exercise regularly, and avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs.

Ideas for healthy meals, especially for those that may be living in on-site or other temporary accommodation can be found in the [Healthy Soldier Cookbook](#).

Fitness

If you are well enough, you can take part in light exercise within your home or garden. Ideas of exercise that you can do at home can be found on the [NHS website](#).

You can also access almost 600 free exercise videos on [Fitness Blender](#) that can be filtered by difficulty, length and other criteria.



Fresh Air

Keep your windows open to let in fresh air, and get some natural sunlight if you can, or go outside into the garden. If you're not in a vulnerable group and not self-isolating, consider going for a walk - try to walk somewhere quiet and ensure that you remain 2 metres away from others.

Smoking

If you smoke, you are putting yourself at greater risk of developing severe disease from the COVID-19 virus. Those around you who are exposed to second hand smoke, including children, are also going to be at increased risk.

Smoking tobacco damages the lungs and airways, causing a range of severe respiratory problems. Evidence clearly shows that the COVID-19 virus attacks the respiratory system, which explains why smokers are at greater risk. A small but [highly impactful survey from China](#) finds that smokers with COVID-19 are 14 times more likely to develop severe disease.

In addition, the repetitive hand to mouth movement provides an easy route of entry for the virus, putting smokers at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.

As the NHS continue to prioritise medical support for COVID-19, some every day support services have had to be reduced or temporary suspended. This includes many of the National No-Smoking Support hotlines. However, you can still access support online and cessation products should still be available at pharmacies. For more information on COVID-19 and Smoking follow the [Smokefree Action Coalition](#).



Smoking

Useful online resources

- **NHS Choices:** [NHS Stop Smoking advisers can help you quit.](#)
 - [England](#)
 - [Northern Ireland](#)
 - [Scotland](#)
 - [Wales](#)
- [Action on Smoking and Health](#)
 - Action on Smoking and Health is a registered charity that can help you stop smoking
- [Quit](#)
 - Quit is a registered charity that supports smokers to stop smoking.



Alcohol

Everyone in Defence is encouraged to drink sensibly as part of a healthy lifestyle: even a small reduction in alcohol consumption can significantly benefit your overarching health and wellbeing.

Keep an eye on how much you're drinking. If you think you are drinking more than normal or are concerned about your habits, do seek advice and help.

The [NHS](#) website provides alcohol advice and support, and [Drinkaware](#) provides users with self-assessment tools as well as further guidance about how to reduce your alcohol consumption whilst at home.



Gambling

Research published by [Gamble Aware](#) (not accessible on MOD IT systems) earlier this year showed that exposure to gambling advertising, including on social media, can affect attitudes towards the prevalence and acceptability of gambling, and in turn increase the likelihood that a child, young person or vulnerable adult will gamble in the future.

As many Defence people will now be experiencing some degree of self-isolation, it's important to think about how to provide support to anyone experiencing gambling-related challenges.

If you, or someone you know, needs gambling help, advice and support, [Gamble Aware](#) has help online (their website cannot be accessed via MOD IT systems) or you can contact the National Gambling Helpline on **0808 8020 133**.

